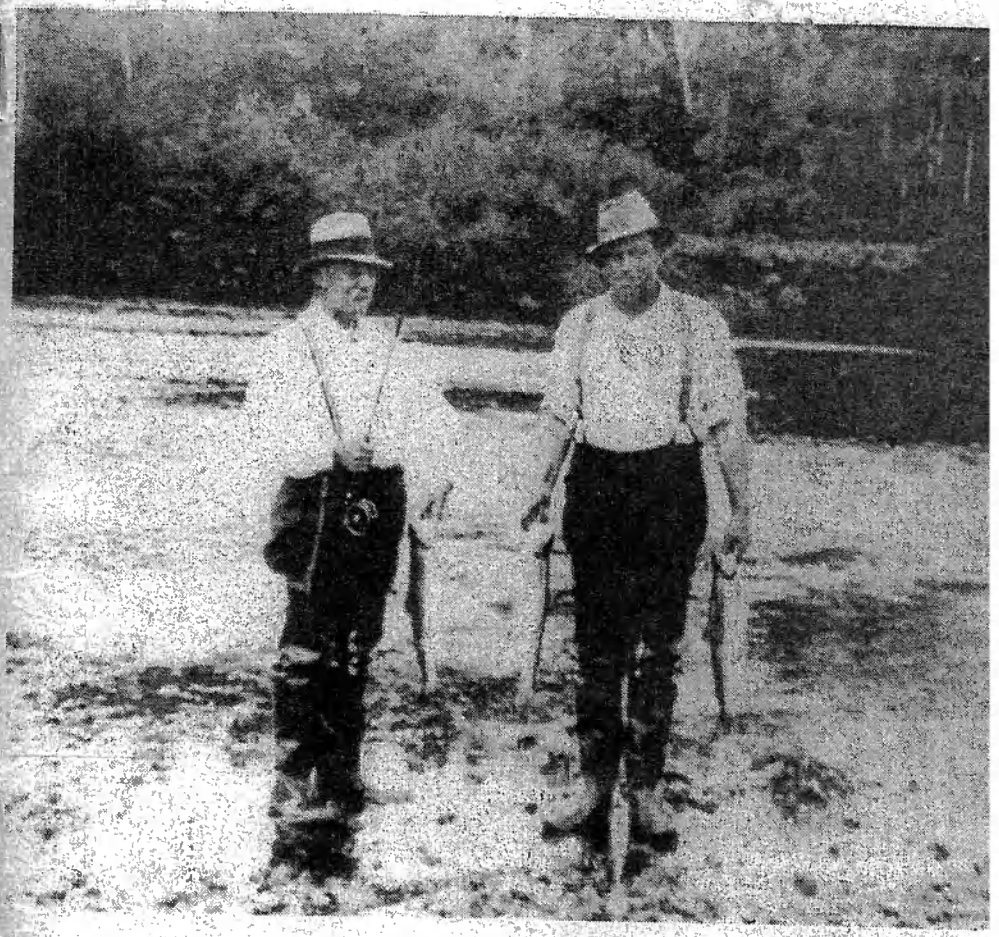
MIRAMICHI MEMORIES



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Foreward

These are my special memories of the community where I was born and lived until I was between ten and eleven years of age, written over fifty years later.

I guess one's childhood memories stay with a person for life. In later years, especially after the death of my sister Molly, I put these thoughts down on paper. My three younger sisters, I hope, will benefit from these words as well.

Christina had never spent even one night in our home, she was taken away to be taken care of by kind hands, after the death of our Mother. But in later years, we were very happy to have her back in the fold with us and we all love her very much. The twins, of course, were too young to remember ever having lived at home. But through our Aunt Della, we have always kept in close contact with them and they have always known that we were their brothers and sisters. And too, my Father visited my Aunt's home to see them sometimes and they probably got to know that he was their real Father, when they were young.

The old home where we were born and lived in those years, has long ago disappeared. After we all moved away, my cousin, Roy, purchased the place and later had the old house torn down. There he built his own house where he and his wife, Greta, brought up their own family. They have been living there for many years. The old homestead where my Grandfather, Uncle, Aunt and their family lived is still standing and looks as good as it did those long years ago. My Aunt Elwina and cousin Pat reside there still. This is a lovely home to which has been added all modern conveniences.

The old school-house where we got our early education is still standing. But as with many older schools, it was abandoned with the new school system of bussing students to newer and larger schools. We spent many happy days in this old school and I have a lot of happy memories about it. But progress is progress and things must change. You would hardly recognize the old community now. A great many new houses have been built, lived in by children and grandchildren of the residents that were there when we were children. Of course, there

also remains many of the older houses that were there then and still look very good indeed. All modern conveniences have come into each home making it a very up-to-date area. I still love to visit my place of birth and it will always remain a very special place in my memories.

A.M.R.

This book is in memory of my sister, Molly and is dedicated to my Aunt, Elwina O'Donnell.

In Appreciation:

My many thanks go to my daughter, Jeanette Cosman and to my sister, Della Campbell for all the help they gave to me in getting this book published. Also thanks goes to my sister, Connie Reid, for the photos used in the book.

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Cover

This is a photo of my Father, Everett Price on the right and an American sportsman on the left.

- M E M O R I E S -

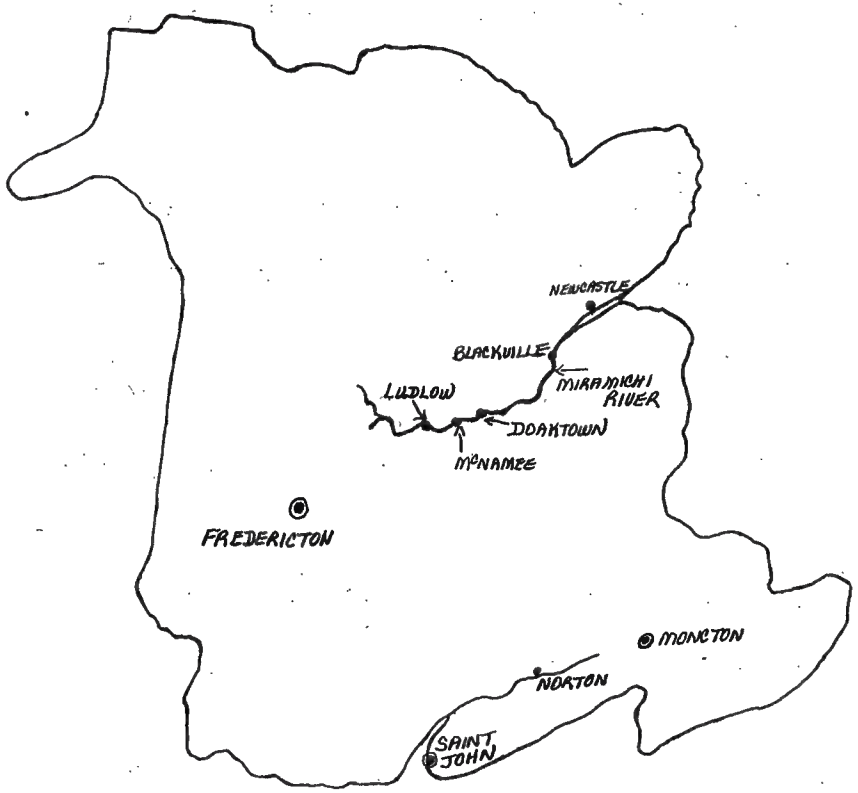
My mind often wanders back over the years,
bringing many smiles, and too, a few tears.

As I think back over my childhood days,
some sad, most happy, in so many ways.

Times were very hard, we didn't have a lot,
I still have my memories and memories can't be bought.

In my mind, I often think of the days that used to be,
those good old days of living along the Miramichi.

A.M. Ross



The name of the community where I was born and brought up was a little place called O'Donnell's nestled between Carrolls Crossing, just above Doaktown and McNamee, just below Ludlow along the famous Miramichi River, in New Brunswick. Most of the people in our neighbourhood were named O'Donnell. My mother was an O'Donnell and we lived near her old home. I never knew my maternal Grandmother as she died at an early age.

I was born in the mid-nineteen twenties, the fourth child and the first girl in our large family. The first child, a son, died in infancy. Then there came my two brothers, Murray and Reg. Before too many years had passed, there followed in quick succession Molly, Todd, Juanity, Constance and Della (twins), and finally the baby of the family, Christina.

Times were very hard for us during those years because we were a very poor family, but somehow we managed to get by. There was no hydro in the community, therefore, we had to do without a good many things which people take for granted today. Of course, we had no indoor plumbing, so we had to carry our water for use, sometimes quite a distance. I know we used to get water from a spring situated across a field and down a hill. Sometimes we would get water from my Grandfather's next door. They had a huge puncheon sunk in a well or spring with a cover over it and of course they had a well house built over this and then too, they kept the door closed, so that no little person could get inside. In the spring and summer my mother used to keep a barrel or a tub under the eaves to catch rain water for doing the family wash, scrubbing the floor and even to bathe in. Then in the winter she would fill the washboiler with snow, then sit it on the stove to melt for the same purposes. People who didn't have, had to make do.

The women in our community were hard working people. You must remember, in those days, there were very few conveniences, if any, to make their work easier. Most of them had big families to care for, had to clean their floors on hands and knees with a scrub brush, wash their clothes on a washboard and most of them had rag rugs which had to be taken outdoors to beat the dust out of them. Then there were the chores of carrying wood for the Star cooking stove plus a second

stove in the parlour to provide more heat. Then too, there was water to be carried, sometimes from a distance, a pail in each hand. Most of the heating and cooking utensils were made of iron and so were very heavy to lift. You can imagine trying to drain an iron pot full of potatoes! They had to make their own bread using hard yeast cakes. They would set the sponge the night before and next morning add more flour and kneed it. It was practically an all day job. A lot of them had to repeat this procedure several times a week in order to have enough bread to keep their family going. Then too, they had to heat irons on the stove to do their ironing with; it's no wonder they were called "sad irons". Besides all these chores they were often called upon if there was sickness or a death in the community. I well remember when my two little sisters and my little brother took very ill with scarlet fever and within days, it seemed to me, the two youngest were dead. Aunt Winie and a neighbour were called upon to lay them out. It must have been a very sad job for them to do, but thats the way women were in those days. If they were needed, you can be sure, they were always willing to help out.

I remember very well the time these little ones were taken ill. Everybody was very concerned about them, but I don't believe they thought for a minute that they weren't going to get better. Todd was about two and a half years old, Molly must have been a year older, then there was the baby Juanita; she would stand by a chair and hang on, just taking a few steps. She was a very pretty child with dark curly hair and we all adored her. After Todd and Juanita died, I used to watch out the window to see if they were coming back. Remember, I was very young at the time and could afford such fantasies! In those days, death seemed to be always knocking at your door.

In all but the very coldest weather, we children ran barefoot and never seemed to mind it in the least. Oh, we were always stubbing our toes or once in a while we would step on a nail or a piece of glass and you would hear us screaming all up and down the river; but by large we enjoyed our barefooted capers. I remember in the spring of the year the men usually tarred the bottom of the boats and left them upside down to dry. One day, we kids thought it would be alot of fun to run

over the tarred boats in our barefeet. So over them we did run, then over the grass and sand and then back over the boat bottoms. We kept doing this until we must have had an inch or two of all this grass, tar and sand on the bottom of our feet. If we thought that was fun, the fun didn't really start until the adults attempted to get the mess off. I can see my cousin Pat, yet, trying to scrape it off of my feet with a knife.

In the cold weather we usually wore Gum Rubbers or Shoe Packs, a type of moccasin that came up above our ankles. When the gum rubbers would get a hole in them, the men would take a piece of tin with holes in it, something like a nutmeg scraper, and they would rub the spot til it was rough. After putting some kind of inflammable stuff on it, from a tube; they would set fire to it and it would go "poof". Out they would blow it, then quickly put a patch over this spot, which really stuck very well. Once again the rubber became leak-proof. When we wore our shoe packs we had to be very careful because if you happened to step on anything the least bit slippery, down you would go on your backside. Many were the times that I would be sitting instead of standing. Our socks were usually home knit from the needles of our mothers or other female relatives. The girls were long to come up over their knees because no female wore trousers in those days. The girls did wear long drawers and, of course, you wore bloomers over these. The rest of the girls' winter clothes consisted of a warm vest next to your skin, then slips made of flannel. Over these you would wear either a dress or a jumper and pullover sweater, then would come your winter coat before you dared venture outdoors. On your head would go the stocking leg cap. Both boys and girls, of course, had home-made mitts plus a scarf to cover mouth and nose. Mostly all of the winter clothes were made of flannel, wool, melton cloth or the <u>always rough feeling</u> serge.

The boys wore long underwear with a flap in the back. The front was buttoned all the way up to the neck. They, of course, wore warm shirts, more than likely made of flannel. Sometimes they wore home-knit vests over their shirts. The trousers the boys wore were called britches (breeches). They had narrow legs halfway up to their knees with laces on either side; then they gradually ballooned out to quite a width around the hips. The boys all wore braces to keep the

britches up. For outdoors they wore macknaws over their outer clothes.

A lot of the clothes at our house were second-hand, but we didn't mind as we were only too glad to have something warm to wear.

In winter we had lots of snow to play in. Usually we made snow-houses and snowmen. Many a warning we would get, from the adults, not to dare take any good wearing apparel out to put on the snowmen. Nearly every family had snowshoes in those days. Sometimes you couldn't go too far in the snow without them. Many a time we kids would get a pair of snowshoes on and have a great time walking around in the snow.

For indoor entertainment, in the winter, we would play house in one of the bedrooms. Once while playing house, my sister, Molly, cut Todd's hair off. Our Mother, you can be sure, wasn't too pleased about that. The scissors were kept well hidden from that day on! We also played cards, such as Old Maid, Fish, Rummy and Auction. Often we would make a checkerboard out of an ordinary piece of cardboard. We would mark this off in little squares and shade every other square with a lead pencil. For checkers, we would cut out twenty-four little squares of cardboard and shade half of these with the same lead pencil. Then we'd have a checker game going! This made for many hours of entertainment.

Of course, then, too we made our own Valentines out of anything we could get our hands on, such as light cardboard, scribbler paper; oh just anything that was available. We would cut these in heart shapes, square or oblong. Then we would draw pictures on them or cut pictures out of the Eaton's catalogue and stick them on with a paste made out of flour and water. Of course the crowning touch was the verse we made up ourselves to suit the person they were intended for. After all this enjoyable work we were all set to give Valentines to all our friends.

Other times for entertainment my Father would play the violin. We would sit and listen in a dream world to music such as, "St. Annes Reel", "Money Musk", "Delvils Dream", "Irish Washerwoman" and many others. I used to love to hear him play and sing the slower pieces, too such as "My Darling Nellie Gray", "When You and I Were Young Maggie", "The Old Spinning Wheel in the Parlor" and many more. We children learned the words of the old songs in this way. In my memory I can still hear them

yet.

There were very few parties in those days so we had to make our own entertainment. Sometimes there would be a card party held at my Grandfather's house and if you were pretty good at playing auction, you were allowed to sit in to make up a table. I must have played fairly well or maybe they were in dire need of a player, because I remember many a time playing at these card parties. I know I felt pretty important to be playing with the adults.

On the first of May we always made May Baskets out of soda boxes or any other small boxes around the house. We would trim these to perfection with crepe tissue paper using flour and water paste to stick our decorations on with. Then we would fill them with any goodies that were available. These baskets we would take from house to house, knock on the doors and shout the person's name they were intended for -- then yell "May Basket, May Basket for You!". The trick was to hide before the door was opened so the person wouldn't know who the basket came from. We children loved this tradition and I'm sorry that it hasn't been carried on to this day.

Nearly every family had a rope or chain swing. Usually they were placed between two trees. There would be either a single swing where one child would sit on a board or plank seat, then another would stand with their feet planted on either side of the other person and pump and away they would go. On the double one there would be three or four sitting and probably one standing on each end pumping and away we would go flying through the air. Another thing we would do on the swing was this: we would sit ourselves on the seat and another person would wind the rope or chain around and around. Then give it a flip to unwind it. Sometimes you would get pretty dizzy, but that just added to the thrill we got. Many, many was the day we would spend on those swings having the time of our lives.

Another of our playtimes was spent in the woods up back of Grandfather's house pretending that we were on a picnic. We would make baked bean sandwiches and if we were lucky, we would have some molasses cookies to take also. Then away we would go. We would spend two or three hours playing house, picking wild flowers and just plain enjoying ourselves.

Another of our playtimes would be spent on making

stilts. We would take a board or a pole and on these we would nail a block of wood and we were all set for walking tall! And of course every child in the neighbourhood had a hoop or rubber tire, if you were lucky. These we would wheel all over the place by using a stick to beat them with. We could keep them going for quite a while.

The greatest times of all were the days in the summer that we spent swimming in the river. Of my early childhood these are the days I remember the most with such fondness and I'll cherish these memories the rest of my life. We were at the river morning, afternoon and evening with a warning not to go in swimming for at least one-half hour or better still, an hour after eating or we would be in danger of drowning. I used to get a poison from some weed growing on the path to the river. We called it "Mercury". My poor legs would break out in these awful blisters. They were so sore and itchy that I would be nearly crazy with the torture of them. Somebody was always bathing my legs in a vinegar and a salt solution or coating them with a baking soda paste which made my legs sting terribly. But that didn't stop me from going to the river to swim! Very few of us owned bathing suits. Therefore the standard swim wear would be an old dress or slip with bloomers underneath for us girls and the boys wore a pair of old pants, sometimes cut off above the knees. The railroad was situated between the little community and the river. Therefore we had to cross the tracks on our way to the swimming hole and we very often laid nails on the tracks just for the novelty of finding them flattened after the train passed over them. Whenever we heard the train coming, we kids would all rush to the bank and wave. We all called our train "The Wooper". I presume it was a nick-name derived from the Dungarvon Whooper legend. Anyhow it was a great thrill for us to run to see the train passing through. We only had a siding at O'Donnell's so the train only stopped when somebody flagged it down, or if there was something to be left for the community. Also of course they had the trolleys going up and down checking the tracks. There would be a man on each end pumping a handle up and down to make the trolley go. As one man went up, the other would go down.

One of the biggest thrills when we were young was

for our Mothers to take us for a ride on the train. I remember very well the day my Mother took me to Ludlow with her on the train shopping. At the store, my Mom bought some loose tea and for a prize she got a little rubber ball about half the size of a tennis ball. I remember how proud I was of that ball. When we got home an old man, who was partly deaf and also partly blind, was visiting my Father and I in my excitement wanted to show off my new ball. I showed it to Hazen and he, thinking it was a chocolate, grabbed it and said "Thank-You" then popped it into his mouth and tried to eat it, which brought tears to my eyes. Of course he sood discovered his mistake and returned my precious ball to me for which I was very thankful.

Another day in the winter time, this same old fellow, Hazen, came for another visit and the knob had come off of the outside of our door. We kids thought it very funny to see Hazen groping around for the knob. After awhile he said "I think I'm snow-blind, I can't find the knob". He probably heard the loud laughter from us, even though he was hard of hearing. He was a fine old gentleman and was a frequent visitor to our home.

The fall of the year was, of course, a time for starting school. Our school was situated about two miles away at McNamee, nearly on a corner where the roads coming home from the back road to the river road met. Contrary to most communities in those days, we didn't have a one room school-house. Ours had two rooms, one on either end of the building with the entries in the center. These rooms were also used as cloak rooms. There was a door on either side of the building; one was for the girls to enter, the other for the boys. One of the main rooms was for the lower grades and the other for the higher grades. Very often we only had one teacher to serve both rooms and they had to go back and forth between each classroom.

I will never forget the day my cousin Midge took me to school. I was probably in grade one, so of course, she had to leave me in the lower classroom. Well I tell you when Midge left me, I sat there and cried and cried, praying for her to come back and get me. I felt so alone among the strange kids. If I remember correctly, the teacher had to take me in to sit with Midge. I bet Midge was thrilled about that. My cousin, Geraldine, must have been home that day sick, as she

was my age and would have been there with me. Of course in those days you had to walk to school and often on our way, we would go up to Minnie Price's. She had apple trees on her place and she would let us have some apples to eat. One kind was what we used to call "Bittersweet" and which we thought very tasty.

We carried our lunches to school in lard pails or little boxes. Sometimes ours didn't have too much in them; bread and molasses probably. Some of the kids, who had extras, very often shared their lunch with us, and too, they used to bring these bottles of home-made cocoa in their lunches. They would set these in the spring between Dud Price's and the school to keep them nice and cold. The icy cold cocoa was so delicious when drank with your noon lunch. The kids would always tie a twine string around the neck of the bottle and the other end to a little bush to keep it from floating away.

I also remember the Wilson boys, whose parents ran a store and the Post Office. They often brought treats from the store for us.

Many times my brother Murray, or I, instead of going home would go in and spend the night at Aunt Dellas. She always did us up a lovely lunch. She always had home-made jelly and preserves and sometimes she would put a little bottle of preserved berries in our lunch and always she would have cake or cookies.

We very seldom had school during the winter months, when we did we always travelled via the railroad tracks. Whenever we would hear the snow plough coming, we had to scramble up over the banks for our very lives or risk being buried alive. In those days our roads were never ploughed in the winter time, therefore it wasn't always possible to have school at that time of the year. Another reason may have been that there was no teacher available for those bitterly cold months, where a wood fire had to be kept going constantly or you would be very cold as the temperature stayed well below zero nearly all winter. Plus there were many storms and blizzards. No doubt the school district thought it wise not to hold school in these bitterly cold months. All the roads we had were the ones the horses kept broken.

My school days were more or less very happy times. I enjoyed my lessons very much and I found most subjects

easy to learn, except arithmetic. I could never, never learn to do it, no matter how hard I would try. But give me something that I could memorize and I was a whiz at it, in fact, I learned a great deal of the British History by heart and could just run halfway through it at a time.

Every Friday afternoon we would have a Spelling Bee. The pupils were all lined up on one side of the room, then the teacher would ask you to spell a word, if you missed, the next in line to spell it correctly moved up the line. It was such fun to stay at the head of the line pretending you were so much smarter than the rest of the students. Other special times the parents or the Trustees visited the school. Then you could really show off all your talents by answering correctly the questions put to you. But, oh how ashamed you would be if you failed to do so and horror of horrors and how dumb you would feel if you just sat there not saying a word when a question was put to you and you couldn't think of an answer. There you were feeling like crawling under your desk with everybody staring at you and waiting for your reply.

The one teacher who sticks out in my mind is Regina Hovey. She was so very nice and also very pretty. I'll always remember her with fondness. I must have had other teachers at this same school at other times, but when I think of my younger school days, my thoughts go back to Miss Hovey.

We played lots of games at school in those days too, like Ante - Over, Tag, Farmer in the Dell, Little Susie Sunshine and many, many more. Of course we played Hopscotch, and skipped rope, played Leap Frog and Hide and Go Seek. Many others I have forgotten. They were very happy school days.

Christmas at our house was very meager. I don't recall what we had for Christmas dinner but I'm very sure it wasn't turkey. It could very well have been roast pork and chicken as those seemed to be very popular in our area. But I do know this, we were very excited at the prospect of Christmas coming and I'm sure we got as much as what our parents could afford and we were satisfied with what we got. One year I do recall getting a dime bank and a pair of gum rubbers, and some hard candy or homemade molasses candy. Of course we had no money to put in our banks, but we were very happy to get it anyhow. Many a Christmas my Aunt

Della who had no children of her own, would bring us a big box of goodies such as home knit socks and mitts, underwear, fruit and candy. Whatever she could get, she brought to us. She was my Mother's sister and we considered her our second Mother. We all loved her very much and a few years later we learned how very important she would become to us.

Our dear Mother died in 1934 while giving birth to our baby sister and her tenth child. She had already suffered the loss of three of her children and was only thirty-five years old at the time of her passing. Our poor Mother had to work very hard with very few comforts of life and all we seven children left lost a very dear friend and Mother when she left us all.

Times sure changed after that for all of us. The baby, first of all, was taken by May O'Donnell for awhile. Then she was adopted by a couple living down the road from us, Grace and Clifford Lyons. Then our Aunt Della and her husband, Emery, adopted the twins and they took me along to stay with them until she got used to them and to help make them feel more at home. She never could tell them apart and always kept a safety pin fastened to one so that she would know who was who!

We had several housekeepers, just looking after us out of the goodness of their hearts; as I am sure they received no pay, because there just wasn't any money around to be paid to them. My cousin Reta, was one of our housekeepers and my brother, Murray, used to tease poor Reta so much. He was an awful fellow to tease and I'm sure Reta could have crowned him at one time or another, but he was so good natured, nobody could help but like him. My other brother, Reg, was much more serious and more dependable about running errands than Murray. I'm afraid Murray was more inclined to visit, than hurry back home again. These two brothers were very dear to us and when they left home, it was much too soon for Molly and I, and we missed them very much.

After Murray and Reg left home, each to go their separate ways, to Weavers Siding and Blissfield respectively; that left Molly and ME alone more often than not and most of the time we had very little in the house to eat. We would go up to my Aunt Winie's and Uncle Donald's house. They were more like parents to us than Uncle and Aunt. They, too, had a big family

of their own to take care of, but my Aunt, after feeding her own family, would sit Molly and ME up to the table and feed us. I guess you could say they were keeping us alive. I'll never forget it as I don't know what would have become of us. Aunt Winie and Aunt Della, two very important women in our lives after the death of our Mother.

I must not forget to mention our old dog and constant companion. Especially at night, he watched over us and would not allow any harm to come to us. Nobody dared to lay a hand on us when he was around. What comfort we had from having him with us. Sometimes when either of us would be sick, Aunt Lydia would come in and sit with us and keep the fire going and she was very frightened of poor old Boney! Everytime she moved to put a stick of wood in the stove or check on us, Boney would snarl and growl at her and scare her nearly to death.

Another event in our childhood when Molly and I stayed alone so much, was the appearance of four bears in the crabapple trees right across the road from our house. I was walking down the road from my Grandfather's at the time when I saw the bears. I started yelling and screaming so loud, most of the men in the neighbourhood came running with their guns and they shot the Mother bear and two of the cubs. Later they stood the old Mother bear's body up against the fence along the road to show her off and I was scared to walk past it. As a result of this bear episode, I have always been terrified of bears.

Another time that comes to my memory is when we five girls in the area, who were around the same age -- somewhere around ten or eleven years old, put together five cents to buy a small package of cigarettes, you used to get five for a nickel in those days! We got them at the little store up the road that Daisy Stewart used to run. One of us bought the cigarettes and away we all went to a safe place where we wouldn't be seen or caught and each of us lit up a cigarette. We thought we would have a lot of fun having a smoke, but as it turned out we ended up coughing and choking half to death. I'm afraid that ended our craving for smoking at that time.

In the winter time, most of the men used to work in the lumberwoods. My Grandfather used to have a crew

every fall to go into the woods cutting logs and they were gone most of the winter. Oh, sometimes they would come out for the odd weekend but alot of the men just stayed right in the camp and in the spring they would all arrive home tired and happy to be back in civilization again. When they came home it was a great time for our cousins and us, as we got to rummage through all of the goodies that were left over and were brought back from the cook-house. We also got to play on what they called the water tank. It was made of wood, which smelled like cedar to me. It must have been used for hauling water for the horses and other uses around a lumber camp. It was shaped like a small house. I know we got a big kick out of playing in it.

Later in the spring, when the ice had left the river, the men all went on the spring drive. They all wore these high leather boots with caulks on the bottoms and they would drive the logs down the river to mills between there and Newcastle. But more than likely they went through to Newcastle with them. It must have been somewhat dangerous for them. But we thought it most exciting to stand on the banks of the river and watch them jumping from log to log pushing the ones along that would get stuck in a pile. They had these long poles with something sharp attached to the end which they used for this job. The men would be away on these drives for several weeks. Sometimes the cook-house and other necessities would follow and set up at different places for their accommodation. We always looked forward to the safe return of these men who went on the drives.

In the summer and spring some of the men used to do a lot of fishing in the Miramichi River and sometimes they would be fortunate enough to land a huge salmon too! Nearly everyone had a boat or canoe as they called them; net, fishing pole, line, leader and fly. When they got their material together they were in seventh heaven, ready to catch the biggest salmon in the Miramichi. You were warned within an inch of your life not to ever dare go meddling with any of their fishing gear. Once in a while you would disobey and you knew if you happened to get one of those barbed fish hooks in your finger, you were sure to be found out and you would be in for a lot of trouble. So the best advice was to stay away.

My Father among other things was a Fly Tyer and he

used to keep this big box with all kinds of feathers and hair in it and hooks of every size you could imagine, plus shellac, thread and all other things pertaining to fly tying. It used to facinate me to listen to him talk about the flies he was tying to his old fishing buddies or anybody from near and far who came to buy flies. There would be Dusty Miller, Black Dose, Jock Scott and lots of other names that I have forgotten; but which at the time I thought very exciting! My Father practically stayed on the river, as at one time or another he was first of all a great fisherman, a better than average Sportsmans' Guide and I presume a good Fish Warden.

In the spring, the men also netted Gaspereau. The smelt and shad did not come up the river as far as where we lived; so our most important fish foods were the delicious salmon and the lovely gaspereau. But we loved all their nice flavor. I know I did and still do. My Father used to salt a lot of these two kinds of fish to have for winter's use and besides we would have fried salmon, boiled salmon, fish chowder made from salmon when it was fresh out of the river. I never got tired of eating the Miramichi's most well known product. And who could forget in the winter time, the feast of potatoes, boiled in their jackets with salted gaspereau thrown in on top. What flavor they gave to the potatoes! You were in your glory in the spring to get a dinner of potatoes, gaspereau and fiddleheads! Many were the times the kids went picking fiddleheads. We picked them by the pails, no household went without fiddleheads in the spring.

Later on in the season it was time to go picking blueberries. You would take your lunch, the pails and dippers and away you would go. We used to have to go back over the hill to the main highway, cross it to get over to the Blueberry Plains. My Grandfather owned a car. I don't recall anybody else in the neighbourhood at that time who had a car. I don't know what the model was but it had those stiff brown curtains that would snap on or off and it had Ising glass windows. It was quite a novelty for us kids and we thought it was great to pile in the car with Papa at the wheel and off we would go. It didn't take too long for us to reach the Blueberry Plains and there you were expected to work and no fooling around. You were expected to help fill

those utensils that were taken along. We always ate our share too. The berries would be just hanging from the bushes and so big and juicy, you couldn't help eating some of them. More than likely you would put as many in your mouth as you did in your dish. I do remember one time very well, when I overate blueberries while picking and die I thought I was going to; I never felt so sick in my life. I don't think there's anything quite as bad as getting sick on raw blueberries. It would not take the bunch of us long to fill our pails, then we would have a lunch. After lunch we would rest for awhile or maybe play. Then we would get busy and anybody who didn't have their dishes full was given a helping hand by the rest. After that it was time to head home. We would practically live on blueberries for the next week or so. There would be blueberry pie, blueberry bangbellies, stewed blueberries, blueberry cakes and muffins and other items. The women would preserve them for winter and they would also scald them, which they would keep in jugs or jars and these would be used in the winter for pies, etc.

My Uncle Donald kept some cows and every summer the older cousins would take them across to the island, situated off the shore of the river. The cows would have this lovely grass on the island to graze on. The water was very shallow between the shore and the island so they were able to wade across. They also kept some hens and probably a pig or two. And they were never without a couple of horses. We kids used to love to play in the barn, very often in the hay mow. These were wonderful times in our childhood.

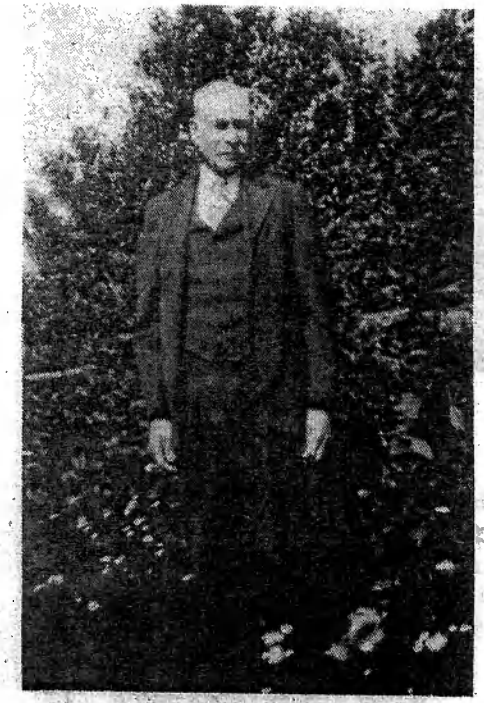
In the fall of the year they would row us over to Butternut Hollow, by boat, which was on the other side of the river. There we would pick butternuts and beechnuts. We would bring back a sack of these nuts then let them dry in the barn. Then the bigger boys would take them out and thump them on the ground in the sack to loosen the burrs on them. Then everybody would get busy taking them out of the their outer coverings. After that we would crack them between two rocks. I wasn't very fond of butternuts, but I loved beechnuts and hazelnuts which were threshed in the same way. Then we would crack the hazelnuts between rocks and have a feast on them.

Most of the houses in our neighbourhood were frame

My Mother
AGNES PRICE

AUNT DELLA

My Father
EVERETT PRICE



Grandfather
ALEX O'DONNELL

GRANDFATHER
O'DONNELL'S
HOUSE

ADA
1942

MURRAY
1942

My Stepmother,
MAGGIE, ADA,
RALPH (my husband)

REG
1942

MOLLY
Early 1940's

TWINS (age 3)
(L.) CONNIE (R.) DELLA

ELWINA O'DONNELL (on right),
Her daughter on the left.
(taken when younger.)

The remaining ones
of our large family.
Back row: (left to right)
ADA, REG, CHRISTINA, MURRAY
Front: CONNIE & DELLA

(Left) JANET STEWART
(Right) ADA, at the age of 15
-1939-

houses made of wood, but there was one log house just below our home. It was owned by Johnson and Vina. They had quite a big family and they were so cute with their blond hair. I used to love to visit them and also loved the smell of homemade bread baking. You would open the door and there would be this beautiful aroma that would hit you. They seemed so very cosy in their log house and I used to imagine that I also lived in a log house. We all thought it was something special.

My Great Aunt Sarah, who lived down the road from where we lived, always attended the Mothers when they were going to have babies. She was almost as good as a Doctor. I remember once, I was running around the banking of our house when I ran into a buck saw that was standing against the house and I cut my leg quite badly and another time I got my finger jammed in the door and busted it and Aunt Sarah used to dress them every day for me. That was when she used to tell me all about how my Mother died. She felt so badly as she was at the bedside when it all happened.

The Christmas after the death of my Mother the Red Cross was kind enough to send us a huge box of clothing, bedding, a fruit cake and, thrill of thrills, barley toys! I had never seen barley toys before and what a treat it was for all of us. When I think of Christmas even fifty years later, my first thoughts are of barley toys. We will always be thankful to the Red Cross for making a happy Christmas for a bunch of Motherless children!

My Father was very seldom at home in those days, therefore thats why Molly and I were alone alot of the time after our two brothers left home. As a result we came to depend on each other a great deal. That made us very close. As I was the oldest girl in the family, Molly, being three years younger was depending on me to look after her.

I don't know if I did a very good job, but she was always very special to me and I felt very sad when she developed cancer in her early fifties and passed away when she was fifty-four. I was unable to go to see her as she lived in Kingston, Ontario at that time and I lost a very important part of my early childhood. My little sister, who got head lice when she was six or seven years, so my Father cut her hair all off. I don't think either of us could forgive him for doing that. I

can see her yet wearing a stocking leg cap all summer long, as she was so ashamed to be seen without hair. How I loved and felt sorry for her!

I don't remember getting many beatings when we were growing up. But, we did get threatened with the razor strap many times and I guess that put the fear in us and kept us on the straight and narrow. There was one whipping that does stand out in my memory at this time. It happened this way: While Reta was staying with us one time, I stole a nickel or a dime out of her sweater pocket and made a bee-line to Stanley Lyon's store. There I proceeded in buying a huge bag of candy and being the generous type, did me in. I treated all the kids in the neighbourhood and we had a great time licking and chewing on this candy, but someone let the cat out of the bag and I was in for it. So a strapping I did get for going so light-fingered. After that I would think twice before taking something that did not belong to me. Poor Reta didn't have anymore money than the rest of us and I suppose she sorely needed every cent she could get. She was another very important part of our early growing up years.

She used to come to our house to take care of us even before our Mother died. I remember that morning very well. I was sitting in the rocking chair, with a twin sitting on each arm of the chair and Reta was standing by the stove crying. I didn't understand why she was doing so.

Reta's Mother was my Mother's older sister. We didn't see a lot of Aunt Julia (at that time); the reason being that she lived on the back road, some distance from our home and then too, she was busy bringing up her own family. But never the less, she was loved by us all and it was her that Aunt Della used to get to do all the knitting for us.

Most of the people in our small community belonged to the Church of England. The church was situated at Carroll's Crossing, about two or three miles down the road from where we lived. So we children didn't attend Church every Sunday. But mind you we did attend and well I remember the times we did so. They seem very important to me, now that I have had a church up-bringing in my early years. We did have, what we called a Mission school in our own community. Probably built by early settlers, where Sunday School classes were

held every week and sometimes a mid-week service was held. I can remember Pearl as my Sunday School teacher and a very good one she was. We little ones were given pretty cards with nice pictures on them, plus a Bible verse we were to learn. When we got older we learned our lessons from the Catechism and every week we attended, we were given a star. It was such an honor to have perfect attendance and get stars all across our cards.

At Christmas time they always held a concert where each student would go up front and recite a Christmas poem. Of course, the parents attended as guests. It was most apt to be just the Mothers in attendance. After all the entertainment was over, joy of joys, your name was called and you would march up and get a gift and a bag of candy, and an orange or an apple. How excited we would be to rush back to our seats with our treasures, and tear the paper off to see what our gift would be. Maybe a book, paints, a little doll, a horn or a jigsaw puzzle or even a whistle! Of course we did get wearing apparell such as mitts, socks, or a nice warm scarf. We all felt happy indeed. I don't recall having a Christmas tree; but there may well have been, I was too concerned about all my goodies. I can't remember having a tree at our house either, we were probably too poor to have trimmings. I do know there were no scarcity of trees around.

Another celebration we kept in those days was the coming of Hogmanay on New Year's Eve. We always called the old fellow "Hogney". I thought it was because he didn't leave us as much as Santa Claus did. But I learned in later years that it was an old Scotish tradition brought from the old country by early settlers. Our maternal Grandmother was a Scottish lady, so its quite possible that it came from her ancestry. Anyhow the old gentleman arrived on New Year's Eve and we children set a plate on the table to await his arrival. And the next morning, sure enough, there was evidence of his having called. We would get an apple or an orange, sometimes some candy. I am sorry to say this tradition has gone with the years. It was something we children in those days, looked forward to.

Another of the things that comes to mind of my early childhood, when we were all home together, was some of the men in the neighbourhood visiting our home in the

evenings and they and my Father would sit around telling Ghost stories. We kids would sit there all ears, taking everything in, while our eyes got bigger and bigger. We would believe everything that was said and some of these old tales were pretty blood curdling.

One old tradition that took place and will long stay in my memory was of everybody, children and adults alike, visiting at the house of a dearly departed and viewing the remains. There were no undertakers in those days in our area, so the dead were usually laid out by members of the neighbourhood and they, of course, didn't do the job that a professional would have done. I've always felt, since then, that children should not have been allowed to go to such places. Nevertheless all that time they were and many a fright I received. There's no doubt the other kids did too.

Once my Father sent me to the store on an errand. On the way I had to pass such a home where my Great Aunt was laid out, and of course, I had to go in and see her, much to my sorrow. As I started on to the store, I got so frightened that I turned around and ran all the way home. Then I told my Father that the store was closed!

Do you know that Halloween slips my mind completely! I can't recall if we went out trick or treating or not.

Easter was a quiet time, oh everybody tried to outdo each other eating eggs, but I don't believe the Easter Bunny had arrived in our community in those days. I guess we thought of Easter more of a religious celebration than of anything else.

We had a community hall down the road from where we lived, where a good many of the men used to hold orangemen's meetings. I vaguely remember about a special room they had to keep locked up. I know there was a mystery about it. They tried to make us kids believe a goat or some such animal was kept in this room, which was used for initiation purposes. We were very gullible at that age and really believed them! At this hall, too, the boys held cub and scout meetings. They would all get these little uniforms on and feel so important. I must admit they did look rather nice. In later years the hall was used for all kinds of social functions, showers, receptions, dinners and other things.

A very happy time for Geraldine and ~~me~~ I was when Aunt

Nora would arrive for a visit at our Grandfather's and would bring us these lovely clothes. I think they were clothes that were too small for Aunt Nora's Grandchildren and she thought they would fit us. They were very pretty, bright colored dresses, also slips, stockings and other things. We would have such fun trying these on just hoping each item would fit us and that we would be allowed to keep them. I, for one, was very proud and would strut around in these lovely dreses that had belonged to two other little girls.

In those days it was very seldom that you would see a woman smoking a cigarette. Perhaps it took place, but in some secret place, never in public. Some of the older women did smoke pipes. Those, who wore long dresses, had some kind of pocket in their petticoats where the pipes were kept. On the other hand, a lot of men, besides using their pipes and cigarettes, very often had a plug of tobacco in their pockets which they would snip a piece off with their jack knives, pop it in their mouth and chew it. Once I saw my Grandfather ~~lit~~ his plug down, and being every so curious all my life; I picked it up and bit a piece off of it. What a surprise I got! To my horror it didn't taste a bit like the spruce gum we were used to chewing which I thought it might be similar to. I've never had the desire to chew tobacco since.

In those days food was more or less on the simple lines. Nothing fancy. People were more interested in a good hearty meal for their families rather than something fancy. The standard dinner would probably be the ever popular pot of potatoes. Then meat which was more apt to be pork, salted in summer, frozen in winter. There was more apt to be fish than meat. I know it was at our house. In the summer it woud be freshly caught from the river and in winter it would of course, as I mentioned before be salted. Vegetables weren't always available. Of course in the summer if you had a garden you were all set with fresh vegetables and in the spring we had the ever popular fiddleheads. In the summer everybody must have had a lot of cucumbers as they seemed very popular for meals. And then the Mothers always had home-made bread, fruit pie in season, baked beans, corn cake; amongst other hearty foods they used to make. One dish that sticks out in my mind, that Aunt Winie used to make, was called "Pork

Tarts". They were very delicious. Somehow or other she would put pork, molasses and other goodies in a baker sheet covered with strips of biscuit dough, baked in the oven and you had a meal fit for a king.

There was no bridge across the Miramichi River in our area and to get to the other side of the river, where Priceville was situated, we had to go over by boat. If there was no boat available on our side we would yell "bring over the boat" and somebody on the other side would row over and get us. Many years later they did erect a cable bridge across the river from McNamee to Priceville and I think about the first or second year of its existence, some people got drowned from it. I think it was in the spring of the year when the water was high, and too many people were on the bridge at one time and they got dumped off and nearly all of them drowned. Much later while visiting my Aunt Della, she took the notion that we should go to Priceville to visit some relatives. She says, "We'll go across on the bridge". The bridge was very, very high up in the air and you had to go up these steps on the abutement to get to it. Being always terrified of heights, I can't imagine why I ever went up there in the first place! Anyhow up we went. After arriving I put one foot on the bridge and it started swaying and I began screaming and got down out of there mightly fast, vowing I would never every set a foot on that bridge again. This vow I'm glad to say, I have faithfully kept. Poor Aunt Della had to come down too, when she saw I was such a coward. There she stood and yelled "bring over the boat" and one of the boys came over and got us. That day I shall never forget. I tell you I keep my distance from cable bridges.

Often I would visit my Aunt Della, Emery and the twins and sometimes, it seemed, for weeks at a time. The old Miner house was just below Della's and Emery's parents' old homestead. At that time it was quite old. But it made a great play-house and Connie, Dode and myself spent many a day playing there. We used to gather the old rags in it, and sell them to the rag-man. He would give us five or ten cents for them and we thought we were rich, because that seemed alot of money to us in those days. You could get a lot of candy for a nickel.

Other times Emery and I used to go picking

blueberries or raspberries. We would take our lunch with us. Then we would pick berries half of the day. Emery used to make this awful tasting cold drink to quench our thirst in the berry fields. I think there was molasses and oatmeal in it. Whatever there was in it, it sure tasted ghastly! But when you're thirsty, you will drink almost anything. We were always glad to get home with our pails full of fresh berries and to some nice, fresh water to drink, plus the good supper Aunt Della would have cooked and waiting for us.

Some days Connie, Della and I would go up the road to visit a lady named Lulu. She and her husband, Alex, lived just above Emma's and Bob's. Lulu would make us these lovely rag dolls, and also the clothes for them. We thought these dolls were something special and the three of us will long remember Lulu and the rag dolls she made for us.

Murray and I used to help take care of the twins when they were little and I always felt close to them. We had a huge cradle at home and Mother would put a baby in each end and either Murray or I would sit in the middle and rock them to sleep. One time I was carrying one of them through the field towards my Grandfather's and I dropped her out of my arms. I was so afraid that she was hurt, or even worse, dead. I hardly knew what to do. So in a minute or two I reached down and picked her up, then went on my way, very thankful that she wasn't hurt.

When the twins were born Aunt Sarah sent me up to Della Howard's to borrow safety pins. Della asked me how many babies were down there; I answered "three". It seemed everybody was going with a baby in their arms. The adults teased me for years about this incident. You may be sure I learned to count better after that!

When I was at home, many of my days were spent at Inez's house where we played by the hour. Either swinging or playing house, sometimes we would go up to her room and jump on the bed. I'm sure her Mother would have been pleased to know that! Inez's Father was the only one in the neighbourhood that I can recall, who grew cultivated strawberries and lots of times he would allow us to pick some for their own use. Of course we ate nearly as many as we picked for the house, and I thought they were the most tastiest things I had ever eaten.

Inez and I often went swimming leaving from her house. One day when Geraldine, Millie, Pauline, Inez and I were swimming, Inez went away out in the deep water and nearly got drowned. I happened to rush out and help get her in, as she was bobbing up and down trying to keep her head out of the water and trying to get our attention. I guess I was sort of a heroine that day, but I didn't think anything of it at the time. I just thought about helping a friend out. From then on Inez was more careful about going out into a deep hole. She and I had many happy days together, which I still remember with fondness. Of course we all played together, Pauline, Millie, Geraldine, Inez and I. We never seemed to get into any real trouble and we all enjoyed ourselves, playing together, very much.

There were no more than a dozen or so houses in our neighbourhood and we were all as welcome in one as the other and if you needed help there was always a willing hand ready to reach out to you. I have very happy memories of my life at O'Donnells on the Miramichi and it was a very sad day for me when I had to leave my home there. But when I was eleven or twelve years old, I was taken down the river as far as Blissfield to live.

My memory often lingers on those days gone by,
I sit, I remember, I smile, sometimes I sigh.
For those bygone years of happiness and pain,
then I wonder to myself, would I live it over again?
The answer is yes, of course, who wouldn't want to be,
happy and living on the Miramichi!

In this part of my memories, I tell about living among strangers. Oh how lost I felt to be leaving all my friends and relatives I had known since I was born. My Grandfather, Aunt and Uncle, the cousins, besides the ones I have mentioned, there were Basil, older than I, Don, Vic and Toots, all younger. I felt like hiding at Winie's so that I wouldn't have to go. But, Alex Ward came by car to take me to his parents' home. I was terribly afraid to be going to live with strangers and was very homesick. But do you know that all the places I stayed at when I was a young girl, the first thing I learned was, there were no strangers, each and every

place I stayed, they always treated me as a member of the family. Here I was a child and a stranger and they didn't have to accept me with open arms, but they all did and I'll always be thankful to those many people who welcomed me. I never was abused and nobody was in the least bit cross with me and I was very happy after I got used to the people and places.

There are a few places I didn't mention in my memories of mid-teens which I should have. There were the Cliffords, in my young teens, at Weavers Siding. At Blackville there were the Underhills and Donahues where I worked briefly. The Harveys where I helped house clean. I stayed the longest period with the Stewarts, my dear friends, Fred and Janet. I still love them dearly. Janet was like a sister to me and I used to visit them a lot after I was married and had a family of my own.

At Blissfield, I lived at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Walter Ward. There I spent a happy year or so and it was also there, I did get to attend a one room school house, right next door to the Ward's. That meant that I would come home for lunch at noon and do any chores that I had time for. My duties were that I was to help Mrs. Ward in exchange for my room and board. They always had plenty of food and I didn't have to want for anything; plus I made many friends at school and in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Ward had a special room in the back of the house where she kept all her cooking. I used to love the nice smell in that room.

It was while staying at Ward's that I received my very first new dress and shoes to match. They even bought them to suit my own colouring, which was fair, and I had blond hair. So I remember they decided, that rust would be the most suitable shade for me. I was so proud when I wore my new dress and shoes to school.

It was also at Ward's that I first attended the Baptist Church and Sunday School. I thought it such a different Church than our Church of England; as in the Baptist Church you didn't have to get down on your knees to pray. Of course that suited me and I enjoyed attending their Church and Sunday School very much.

Often I would visit the Ward's son's family, who lived just down the road and opposite the school house. This Mrs. Ward used to make the most tastiest bean soup. I had never before tasted bean soup and I just couldn't believe it was so delicious. Long I'll

remember the smell and taste of my first bean soup; in fact, I have never been able to find a recipe for bean soup.

After leaving the Ward's, I went up, and stayed at Aunt Della's to finish my last year of schooling. So back I went to the same school I had started in, McNamee. I was very glad to get back to where my relatives lived and of course I had the twins there with me as well and I helped Aunt Della around the house as much as I could. Also I helped with the carrying of wood and water.

All of our family at one time or another have made our home with Della and Emery. And when we were all married and scattered all over; whenever we returned to the Miramichi for a trip, it would always be at Aunt Della's where we would stay. While I was working in Fredericton, I would spend my weekends, all my special holidays, and any other time available at her home. She and Uncle Emery used to play cribbage for a passtime. That's where I learned the game that has brought me so much pleasure over the years.

After finishing my school period, I went to lower Blissfield for a while. There I worked for my room and board at Weaver's. They were very nice peole to work for. Their house was built long and low. That used to fascinate me. It would take about fifteen minutes to walk the length of the house. While I was staying here, I used to take Sunday walks with a boy from the neighbourhood. We were just friends. But I guess I was growing up. Imagine out walking with a boy! My stay here wasn't very long.

In those days, on the Miramichi, it was the custom to get a girl to stay with a woman if she were ill, or expecting a baby. These girls would be given their room and board in exchange for doing household chores. Most people were too poor to pay wages and this was considered a fair exchange. From Weaver's I went down to stay for awhile where my brother Reg was staying as I had not seen Reg for two or three years. I was very glad to be living with him again. The people we stayed with had a small farm and I used to enjoy the many farm animals they owned. Mrs. Arbeau was a crippled woman and always used crutches to get around with. She taught me how to make quilts, knit and other things. She was an old lady, but she could do anything she turned her

hand to. They had a lovely vegetable garden in which, among other things, she grew peas and you cooked the pods and all. I had never eaten them before and found them very delicious. Every morning, Mrs. Arbeau would get up and put a huge pot of potatoes on to boil for breakfast. As I had never eaten potatoes for breakfast before, I thought it was peculiar, but I ate them anyhow.

Mrs. Arbeau taught me how to make a crazy quilt. She gave me a big square of cotton material. Then all these scraps of every colored material imaginable and then she showed me how to sew them on to the cotton cloth every which way. I thought it was very interesting and could hardly keep my hands off of it until I had it finished. She also taught me to hook mats. She would take a coarse sack, stretch it in a frame of wood, then, clever woman that she was, she would draw a picture of animals or flowers or whatever on the sack. Now it was all ready to start hooking. First of all, she would bring out her rag bag and we would cut strips to hook onto the mat. If the colors did not suit her, out would come the dyepot and she would color them to suit her purpose. Having gotten all the material ready, she would produce the rug hooks and away we would go. You would put one hand underneath the mat, holding the rag and using the hook in the other, you would bring a loop up through to start filling the canvas. I used to like doing all this so much and learned a great deal from this dear old lady.

On Sundays the Arbeau family across the river, and Reg and I used to go to Church and Sunday School. This again was the Baptist Church. I'm afraid my Church of England upbringing was taking a beating in these years.

Another place Reg and I and of course the others went to every week was the silent movie shown at the Community Hall, down the road from where we lived; and when the loving couple would kiss in the movies, everybody would let out these loud smacks on their hands, just for the fun of it. We would all laugh and have a great time.

Most of the time, I enjoyed myself at Arbeau's and got a good practical education. What made it most interesting was having my big brother there with me. Who could ever forget the way he used to tease the ugly

old ram! There was a huge piece of ice in the barn yard and Reg used to put on his skates and skate up and down and around on this ice and drive the ram crazy. The poor animal wouldn't go on the ice because it used to slip and slide. Instead it would run around the edge of the ice roaring and leaping. It seemed such a funny sight. I would nearly fall down laughing. If that old ram could have gotten at Reg, he would have butted him half to death no doubt.

By this time our Father had remarried. She was from Weaver's Siding and her name was Maggie. After their marriage, they moved into Maggie's house at Blissfield where they lived for a few years. They also decided to take my sister, Molly, to live with them. She made her home with them until she was grown up and went out teaching school. After some time they sold the house in Blissfield and bought a house in Blackville and that's where they spent the remainder of their long life together. I used to visit them once in a while and it was there I met a man who was looking for a girl to stay with his wife, who was expecting a new baby. She had two other youngsters to look after and was anxious to have help looking after them. They resided up at, what was known as the lots above Blackville; so-called because the Government issued lots of land to people to help settle a stretch of woods along the main highway.

It was while living at the lots, a woman from there and I hitch-hiked to Blackville one day. We were picked up by these two men in a beautiful car. So in we got, sitting in the back seat. The passenger in the front kept talking away to us, a very friendly man, we thought. After a while he said, "beautiful roads we have here, aren't they?", to which we agreed. Then he asked if we knew who he was, of course we did not. So he says, "I'm your Premier". You could have knocked us over with a feather. Imagine, we were driving along with the Premier of New Brunswick!

The house where I was staying at the lots wasn't finished. Therefore it wasn't the warmest of places during the winter months. I liked the lady of the house very much, but felt sorry for her. She sure had her hands full and she used me the very best. But I had to work very hard. I had to carry water almost two miles and nearly froze to death in doing so. My Stepmother bought some flannel material and got somebody to make

me some warm underwear. I think this good deed saved my life, as I no doubt would have frozen or taken some disease like pheumonia and died.

Most of these places where I was staying didn't have any modern conveniences. Therefore the floors had to be cleaned with a scrub brush on hands and knees and the laundry was done on a washboard using Surprise Soap. There was always lots of work to be done. I wasn't very old, but I was earning my board and a roof over my head. So who was I to complain! - - - After the arrival of their baby and the Mother got back on her feet again, I was no longer needed, or they just couldn't afford another mouth to feed. So I left there and went to stay with her sister Laura.

At that time Laura and her husband Mike had no children of their own. They lived on a farm in back of Blackville. They were lovely people to work for, they used me the very best. I have happy memories of my stay with Laura and Mike. I felt just like a member of the family. Laura, who was terribly infected with Rheumatism, was taking some kind of cure, where she would boil pine needles. Then she would soak a sheet in this water. Then get wrapped up in the sheet clear up to her neck; over this we would wrap a blanket around her. So the steam and fumes would soak into her body. It was a terrible smell, but I guess she thought it was relieving her aches and pain.

At Mike's and Laura's, I used to have to take the cows to the pasture, after milking night and morning, and bring them back to the barn to be milked. The pasture was quite a trek for me. But after getting rid of the cows and on my way home, I would linger in the lane and fields looking around; maybe picking wild flowers or eating cherries or berries, just enjoying myself. I enjoyed these strolls in the fields and day dreaming. At last I would remember that there was work to be done at home and I would hurry on my way.

Another of the chores for me was to help with the milking. I had never milked before, but I wasn't long in learning to do so. I also had never done much outside farm work before, but I soon picked everything up and liked the work very much. I helped with the haying, picked potatoes and other garden produce, fed chickens, gathered eggs, also helped feed and water the other livestock.

Mike and Laura were great providers and bought me

lots of clothes and I felt very lucky to have found a nice place to stay. They were two of my favorite people while in my early teens. I also attended the Catholic Church with them. I was learning a lot about all the denominations in my youth.

While I was staying at Mike's and Laura's, I got to attend my first dance. In those days there were a lot of house dances held and Mike and Laura were always attending these. They always took me along with them and some of the older men would get me up and teach me to square dance. How I loved to square dance from that time on! We would dance half the night away and enjoy every minute of it. The only trouble was the next morning you would be so sleepy that you didn't want to get out of bed, let alone go after the cows. But the work had to be done, so we managed somehow.

It was here also, that I did my first trout fishing. What a pleasure that was! We would stand on this bridge, and dangle our lines, and catch trout we did! I not only liked to fish them, I liked to eat them as well. Laura and Mike, two of my favorite people at that time.

When a soldier from Blackville, who was home on leave at the early part of the war, came to ask me if I would go and stay with his wife, who was expecting a baby, and offered me money to do so; I jumped at the chance. Just to think that I would have money of my own was enough of a bait to get me to go. So off I went with Josie. No matter how hard Laura coaxed me to stay, nothing could stop me.

Josie was another one of those people who couldn't be better to you or do enough for you and my stay there was very pleasant. While staying with Josie, I met my first boyfriend, Archie.

Of course, we were still scrubbing the floors on our hands and knees with a scrub brush. I remember how Josie used to praise my white floors and how evenly I had scrubbed the boards, without a streak on them. Of course that was music to my ears and I was more determined than ever to please her, which seemed easy enough for me to do.

I remember she had a son Jackie, who was going to attend the school for the blind in Halifax and we were busy getting his clothes ready for him, sewing his name labels on each item. Also there was quite a list of

things he had to take with him. So they had to be gotten ready and packed neatly in his suitcase. Josie felt very lonely and hated to see Jackie leave home, but she also understood that it was for his own good, that he get an education to meet life's problems of a blind person.

After Josie's new baby was born and she was over the first few hurdles, she felt she couldn't afford another person to keep, plus my weekly pay -- which probably wasn't much, but you must remember, at that time a soldier's pay was very small and he probably got about one dollar a day. Anyhow Josie and I shed a few tears and I departed.

I didn't go too far, just up the road, a mile or two, to work for Janet and Fred, Archie's sister-in-law and brother. They lived on the old Stewart homestead and ran a farm, plus the men worked in the woods on their own property, cutting logs and pulp. Mr. Stewart, Sr., Fred, Gordon, Archie and a cousin, Tom, all worked together. Janet and I would pack their lunches for them every day and after a hearty breakfast, they would get the horses ready and take off for the woods.

Janet and I would then get busy and do up the barn work and then we would go coasting on the hills around the farm. When the crust was firm on the snow we would slide on toboggans on the crust. What a nice time we had! You would think we were a couple of kids rather than a grown woman and a young teenaged girl. Those were very happy times for me. After all the morning's fun we would rush into the house and do up all the dishes, make the beds and clean the house up. By then it would be lunch time. After lunch we would get the potatoes and vegetables from the cellar and park ourselves in the livingroom. There to prepare them for supper. Why the livingroom, you may wonder? Well that's simple enough, because that's where the radio happened to be and we weren't going to miss the soap operas, just for the sake of supper's vegetables! There we would sit and listen to the radio and peel vegetables half the afternoon.

After the soaps were over, we would go out and do the barn chores, like feeding and watering the stock. Back into the house we would go to put the supper on to cook. If Janet didn't have a roast of meat in the oven, she would fry beef steak and onions. Then she would make gravy and of course we had to have a dessert

ready. I'm afraid at this point in my life, I started getting fat and have continued to do so the rest of my life.

It was also at Janet's that I had my first home made ice-cream. I can taste it yet. It would just melt in your mouth. It was so delicious! They had their own ice-cream freezer, own cream and of course their own ice; which was cut in the winter time and stored in their ice house. Janet would make the ice-cream and the rest of us did our share of turning the crank. It wouldn't be too long before we would have this lovely tasting ice-cream.

On the weekends, Archie would take his cousin Tom and ~~I~~ me for long country rides in his 1937 Chev. One Saturday night we went to Newcastle to see a movie. Newcastle was about twenty miles or so down the river from Blackville. I had never been to such a large place before. What a thrill it was and scarey too! We had a nice time and the boys, bought me a treat at the movie. So I thought I was in seventh heaven.

Another time Archie took his sister, Helen, brothers Gordon and Fred, Janet and ~~I~~ me on a trip to Fredericton. We went to this nice restaurent for dinner. We all ordered these big dinners and when mine arrived at the table I was too excited to eat it and made many trips to the washroom in my nervousness! Remember this was also my first trip to the big City of Fredericton and I was overcome by everything I saw.

One other trip stands out in my mind, while at Janet's; Archie took Gordon, his girlfriend and ~~I~~ me away down country to a place where his sister Helen was teaching school. I believe the name of the place was Fords Mills. We went with the intention to take Helen home for Easter. Well as it turned out, we got stuck in the muddy road and had to spend a very uncomfortable night in the car. The next day we got going on our way again, picked up Helen and arrived home a very tired and sleepy bunch.

Janet and I used to love to dance. So every week Archie would take us to Keenano Siding to the dances. Oh how we danced. I loved the dancers and never had to sit out one of them. I'll never forget the enjoyment of that part of my life at the tender age of fifteen. Janet and I sure had a wonderful time together. She and I often went for sleighrides too and that was great fun; such enjoyment to be sitting behind a smart

stepping horse. She would often let me drive and that sure added pleasure to my trip.

The Stewart's were United Church going people, so I went along with them to the United Church at Blackville. This wasn't the first time I had attended the United Church of Canada. There was a United Church down the road from Aunt Della's. Everytime I would be staying at her place, I always went to that Church and Sunday School. So it just came natural to me to be attending the Stewart's church with them. I have always enjoyed the United Church there. I attended C.G.I.T. and Sunday School, too. I have, except for a brief period while working in Fredericton where I attended Saint Anne's Church of England, always in my late teens onward considered myself United.

After departing from Janet's, I went to work for a Mrs. McRae in back of Blackville. That was another nice place to work. They had a farm and, of course, I had my share of chores to do. But it was all very enjoyable. Mrs. McRae was a nice elderly lady. Her son, Ritchie, was at home running the farm. He was very handsome, in my eyes, and I got a terrible crush on him. But alas he didn't have the same feelings for me, treating me more like a younger sister than anything else. So I had to put such nonsence out of my head. Of course I would never let on to him for anything the way I felt. It would have been very embarrassing for me, if anyone should even guess of such feelings.

It was while at McRae's, that I met two girls who became good friends of mine and the three of us, myself, Hessie Muck and Emma Nicholson were always together. The later of whom eventually married my brother Reg and have had a long and successful marriage. Anyhow every evening Emma, Hessie and I would go for walks up and down the sidewalks of Blackville; sometimes talking to old friends, other times we would be seen chatting with the boys. We were a happy-go-lucky trio and always had a good time. I remember one time, I was visiting my Father's and Stepmother's home, which was at the other end of Blackville from where Emma's parents lived. What happened was, Emma and I were out walking this evening and it became quite late and every time we came to the middle of the United Church Cemetary, which happened to be near the street, each of us were too scared to go our separate ways.

We continued back and forth in this fashion, until it got so late we just had to make up our minds to go one way or another, or better still, each head for their respective homes. This we finally got up the courage to do. I don't know how long it took Emma to reach her destination; I know it didn't take me long, -- half-running and half-walking! When I got home, I rushed in pale-faced. The folks thought for sure something must have been chasing me. They had a great laugh when I explained what had happened. I think Molly laughed the loudest of all, as she thought she should be allowed to go with me and probably was annoyed that she couldn't do so.

From Blackville, I returned to Aunt Della's once again. There to stay for sometime. Sade and Tom, at this time, was looking for a new baby and wanted me to go to their house to help her out. So off I went to Sade's; at that time she had four boys. They were always getting into some deviltry or another. I don't mean they were bad children. They just happened to be four little, lively boys and kept Sade and me on our toes. They used to pretend they were driving cars, by hammering a stick or a thin board in the ground; then taking a cover off a lard can, they would nail this to the stick for a steering wheel. One day Blake was standing, holding one of these covers in his hand and there was a jagged edge in it where the nail had been driven. He started sassing me about something and I reached out to give him a slap on the rear-end. As I did so, the little imp put out the can cover to protect his rear, and down I came, smash on the cover with my bare hand. Those were the kind of tricks that they would love to play on you. After Sade had her new baby, and if I remember correctly, it was a girl, and was able to be around doing all the work again. I of course had to move on. I rather hated to leave Sade's in a way. You see they not only were friends but also a part of the family. Tom and my mother were first cousins and Sade must have been related to me through the Price's, as that was her name before she married. Anyhow they gave me a vote of thanks for helping them out and I once more returned to Aunt Della's. I remained there for quite sometime.

Then another girl and I from the neighbourhood went off to Fredericton to seek our fortune, at the tender

age of sixteen. I left my beloved Miramichi! I often have returned over the years at different periods of my life. Before I was married, I, of course, made many visits to see relatives and friends. After I got married, my family and I have made many visits. My husband, being an avid fisherman, makes many trips to fish salmon in the famous Miramichi River.

Epilogue

My brother, Murray, has been living in Kingston, Ontario for many years, where he and his late wife, Jean, brought up a family; a daughter and a son both living in Kingston. Reg and Emma are living at Blackville, unfortunately their only child, a son, was hit by a car and killed when he was eleven years old. My late sister, Molly's husband, Russ, and their daughter live at Kingston, Ontario. A son lives in British Columbia, unfortunately too, another son died in a tragic accident in his teens. One of the twins, Connie and her husband live at New Bandon. They were blessed with three sons; two living in Fredericton, the other makes his home at Calgary, Alberta. The other twin, Della, lives near Stanley, New Brunswick. She and her husband have a family of three daughters and a son; two of the girls living near home, the other in Fredericton; their son is still at home. Our youngest sister, Christina and her second husband, Jim, are living in Fredericton. She and her first husband had a daughter and son. Their daughter lives a distance above Fredericton, and her son is living in Fredericton.

My Grandfather, Uncle Donald and Emery passed away in the 1940's. Aunt Winie is in her late eighties and is still living in the old homestead, as in my cousin Pat. Aunt Della passed away in her eighties; Aunt Lydia passed away at a ripe old age! Aunt Julia passed away in her seventies. Geraldine is living in Fredericton; Midge at Ludlow, Inez at Doaktown, Pauline also at Doaktown. Millie is a neighbour of Connie's as are Reta and her husband. Janet and Fred are still living at Blackville. My Father died in his late sixties. My Step-Mother, Maggie, passed away in recent years at a nursing home in Chatham.

My husband Ralph and I have been living at Norton for some years. We were blessed with a daughter and a son. Our daughter, Jeanette, her husband and family reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Our son Gary, a Captain in the Armed Forces, is stationed at Ottawa. There he resides with his wife and family.